

President's Report

April 2014

Finally, it reached 70 degrees and I was able to spend time in my garden; seeing emerging peas, potatoes and onions renewed my belief that spring was in fact here. So, I took a huge leap of faith and drained the snow blower. Hope “springs” eternal!

The official spring enrollment numbers are in and we are 3.9% below our target. Contextually, it is important to note that enrollment at Illinois community colleges is down 6.7%. I would like to reflect on three observations. First, our current spring enrollment of 8,900 FTE's is at the same level as spring 2008. The College subsequently experienced enrollment increases due to the economic downturn and the influx of students looking to retrain or begin their college experience at a community college which is more cost effective. Large sums of money were made available for retraining via the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009—that funding is no longer available. We most likely reached levels that we could not sustain. Second, we have implemented many student success initiatives that we know work, and in the short term may cause a decrease in enrollment—namely, ending late registration, and insisting on developmental courses being taken early on. When we implemented these interventions, we noted that enrollment may be impacted. Finally, we continue to hold on to high penetration rate from our sender high schools. Other creative initiatives are needed to boost enrollment in the adult market.

Through these last several months the College has moved forward with major construction projects. It is simply amazing to see all of the construction that has occurred over the winter—particularly when noting that the weather was a challenge. The D Building addition is closer each day to completion. H Building will be ready for occupancy in spring 2015, and the parking structure is seemingly rising out of the ground magically! The brick panel walls present so well and complement surrounding buildings. It is going to be a superb and attractive support for our campus community.

This month we begin to hear news of students winning awards, scholastic and otherwise. We were just notified that two of our students won the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke award and that they will each receive \$30,000 annually for the next two years to support their continued studies. This represents three consecutive years of Harper students being awarded at least one of these nationally recognized awards. In three years, Harper students have won five. More information follows in the Student Success section.

On April 15, we will install the new members of the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society. It is the event that reminds us that graduation is near as it serves as the beginning of the “graduation” season. Our current group is very involved in community service. At a recent meeting with this group, I suggested that they consider assisting us with outreach activities to the 30 public

schools in our district that have a significant number of pupils eligible for free or reduced lunch. The idea is to match current Honors students with the school they attended. We are going to launch this program next fall as an element of our Community Relations program.

We are working very hard to connect with the new Northern Illinois University (NIU) president, Dr. Doug Baker. In collaboration with Dr. Baker, we have developed a joint proposal for our colleagues at Oakton, College of Lake County, Elgin and McHenry to form a “regional consortium” that would facilitate “fast track” cohort degrees offered by NIU at their Hoffman Estates campus. We would provide the first two years on our respective campuses. In essence, we would like to guarantee price point and curriculum pathways for our matriculating students.

These types of partnerships were highlighted in the recently released “implementation guide” that serves as a companion piece to AACCC’s *Reclaiming the American Dream* manifesto which was released 18 months ago. The Board will recall that we studied that document in a planning session in fall 2013. It was so pleasing to see many Harper programs listed as “examples” of interventions that are making a difference in the “student success” and “completion” agendas, nationally. That is what we set out to do five years ago, and we are clearly making progress. We shall provide full copies of the implementation guide to the Board.

Below are highlights of exemplary initiatives from around the College.

Student Success

- The Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship is perhaps the most competitive scholarship open to students at two-year colleges, with only 72 such scholarships given out in a given year. The scholarships are based on a combination of merit and need, so often the winners are students who have overcome more and achieved more than their peers. Students selected for this scholarship have all of their education related costs covered for them as they complete their undergraduate education at prestigious four-year colleges/universities. Harper has been fortunate to have several winners over the past few years, and previous winners have attended well-regarded institutions like Lake Forest College and Bryn Mawr.
- This year we are honored to have two students selected as Jack Kent Cooke award winners: Sean Pedersen and Tiffany Tufts, who are both members of the Harper Honors Program and Phi Theta Kappa.
- Tiffany Tufts embodies scholarship both in and beyond the classroom while here at Harper. She has worked to provide supplemental instruction to other students, has presented one of her academic papers at a recent conference for the Honors Council of the Illinois Region, was a member of the Harper Ethics Bowl team, and has a stellar academic record. She is hoping to continue her education in accounting. She is considering transferring to University of Illinois or the University of Chicago.
- Sean Pedersen is a remarkable student. He reads and writes beautifully and his spirit embodies true resilience. Sean hopes to attend either the University of Chicago or Columbia University in New York. Upon transferring, he hopes to major in Sociology and, after eventually earning a PhD, he hopes to work as a professor and a scholar. Sean’s dream is to dedicate his research, work ethic, and talent to the lives of America’s most underprivileged souls.
- Harper College becomes a “receiving” institution on Transferology. On March 31, 2014, College Source launched its new product, Transferology, which provides transfer information to the higher education community. Transferology assists advisors, students, and parents in making educated

decisions when transferring credit. Students can enter coursework and instantly see how credits transfer to member institutions. Although Harper College has been a long standing member, Harper College became a “receiving” institution on Transferology enabling students not only to see how their Harper courses will transfer to other member institutions but also allowing prospective students to see how their courses will transfer to Harper College. Harper College receives a large number of transfer students each year, often more than some four-year colleges and universities. Becoming a “receiving” institution on Transferology therefore is a wonderful tool for working with prospective students as well as current students who have taken courses at other institutions.

- Nicholas Modlin, a student at Harper College, received the prestigious Illinois Mathematics Association of Community Colleges (IMACC) memorial fund top scholarship for 2014. Nicholas was nominated by Harper mathematics professor Sunil Koswatta and will receive \$1,250 toward the completion of his baccalaureate.
- Twenty-three students completed a Lunch and Learn Series for upper level GED students in April 2014. The program's purpose was to provide ABE/ASE students with affective/motivational resources to support their consideration of college as a viable possibility for their future. The program consisted of six sessions during the academic year taught by Dr. Kenya Ayers and attended by students who either had never considered college as a possibility or who deemed college credential attainment as impossible. Topics included Developing a new narrative, SMART Goal Setting, Resilience, Accessing Support, Developing College Knowledge and Shifting Mindsets. Many of the students will participate in the June 20, 2014 GED Graduation ceremony. Some are already taking college-level courses.
- Some exciting news from the Harper College Speech and Debate team! The weekend of March 21-23rd, the Speech and Debate team competed at the Pi Kappa Delta national tournament. The team took home the Community College Championship! They placed 9th of all colleges and universities competing. This week the team is currently competing at the Phi Rho Pi National Tournament held in Denver.
- On Friday, April 4, the Health Careers Division sponsored Harper's annual Career Trek. Approximately 200 high school students from Districts 211, 214 and 220 visited the campus. Each Health Career Program highlighted their curriculum and lab spaces providing hands-on and interactive presentations. Feedback from the districts was extremely positive. The Health Careers Division will continue this event with a second Career Trek on Friday, April 11, with the expectation of an additional 200 students visiting from the same districts.
- The Human Services Program successfully hosted its Third Annual Human Services Conference on Friday, April 4 with the theme “Shining the Light on Under-Served Communities.” The conference was planned and executed by students in the Human Services program and Human Services Club. The conference provided a unique, inter-disciplinary professional development and networking experience for over 100 participants, including practitioners and educators from human services and health care organizations, schools and universities, international relief organizations, faith-based organization, townships and more. The conference was successful in establishing Harper's Human Services program as a valuable academic and professional development resource, bringing our community together.
- Three wrestlers earned All-American honors at the NJCAA National Wrestling Meet in Spokane, Washington: Jacob Bellis - Seventh Place at 125 Pounds, Blake Santi - Eighth Place at 149 Pounds, and Greg Jacquez - Eighth Place at 157 Pounds.

- The Harper Hawks Athletics brochure received the Gold Paragon, the highest honor in the “Sports Brochure” category, from NCMPR (National Council for Marketing & Public Relations). This was accomplished in collaboration with the Marketing area.
- Over 500 students participated in events hosted by the Office of Student Involvement in the month of March. 125 students took part in campus recreation events, such as lacrosse, billiards, and floor hockey. 65 students enhanced their leadership skills through the Harper Leadership Challenge, and 400 students attended “Hawks Go Irish” sponsored by the Campus Activities Board on St. Patrick’s Day.

Facilities Management

- On March 18, 2014, Governor Quinn approved the release of the remaining state funding for the Canning Center and Hospitality projects. The Design Development Phase has started on the Canning Center Project and the Programming Phase will start on the Hospitality Project as soon the Capital Development Board (CDB) successfully negotiates an agreement with the architect/engineer.
- Interior finishes are well underway in the D Building addition. The project remains on schedule to open for the 2014 fall semester.
- Foundation work and underground utilities are near completion for the east campus parking structure project. Erection of the manufactured precast perimeter wall panel system is underway. The project remains on schedule to open for the 2014 fall semester.
- Interior finishes are well underway in Building H. The project remains on schedule to open for the 2015 spring semester.
- The College experienced record-setting low temperatures and snowfall during the past winter season. Therefore, energy, snow removal, and de-icing expenditures are significantly higher than in years past.

Information Technology

- The project to redesign the student portal was completed. The redesign team took input from hundreds of students, faculty, and staff and recreated the portal with the guiding principles of: 1) simplifying access to information and services; 2) personalizing information for the student; 3) integrating the portal with other components of Project Discover.
- The project to provide academic counselors with secure, convenient, and reliable access to the Banner Student Composite form on Harper-issued iPads, was completed. The Student Composite consolidates essential information for serving the student onto a series of quick-access web pages. Another related project to schedule student counseling sessions on the iPad was also completed. Early feedback from the counselors has been positive.
- The project to automate the transfer of course schedule and enrollment information with Follett’s systems was completed. This interface provides a more reliable and expedient process of keeping the bookstore systems up-to-date with information regarding classes, books and more.
- Deployment of a new application delivery system was completed, providing additional security, system monitoring, and automated system failover and recovery. This will connect and process

data traffic for all key application systems such as the Banner Student Information System, EBS financial system, student and employee portals, etc. All key applications will be transitioned to this new system over the coming months.

Human Resources

- On March 6, Harper hosted a dozen community college Human Resources and payroll professionals for a SURS pension reform training session. Technical aspects of the law were discussed and suggestions were shared with SURS regarding the transition.
- Paula Saltzman has been named co-chair of the Human Resources Administration and Staff Recruitment and Professional Development Committee of the National Advisory Council (NAC) of the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity (NCORE).

Finance and Administrative Services

- Another milestone has been reached for the dining transition to Sodexo with the implementation of the new Harper Dining website, hosted by Sodexo. The site can be accessed on the external website from the Student Life page by clicking on the link “Food Services (Sodexo)”. The food services website includes menus, nutritional information, promotions, health information, and sustainability initiatives.
- Ron Ally was a member of the Higher Learning Commission Accreditation team that visited College of the Muskogee Nation in Okmulgee, Oklahoma from March 10-12.

Advancement

- Rita and John Canning were invited to a special celebration in the Wojcik Conference Center on March 12 to thank them for their generous gift to Harper College. This is the largest private gift in the College’s 47-year history! The College is honored to be the recipient of this gift to benefit students in the Rita and John Canning Women’s Program. This thoughtful and generous gift will assist so many on a new path in life through an education at Harper College.
- The Educational Foundation hosted a reception for the “Small Works on Paper” competition and display in the Harper College Art Gallery on April 10. Donors and friends were invited to meet the artists and enjoy refreshments as they viewed the exhibit.
- We are looking forward to the first annual Scholarship recognition dinner to be held on April 30 in Building M. This event will be an opportunity to bring scholarship donors and their student recipients together. We look forward to acknowledging the achievements of the students and showing our appreciation to the donors who have provided scholarships to Harper students in various fields of study and career paths.
- Events coming include a Nursing Alumni Symposium, an Evening of Jazz reception for Alumni, graduations where we will welcome students as Harper College Alumni, and the 26th Annual Golf Open to be held on June 9.

Planning and Institutional Effectiveness

- The annual Assessment Fair was held at the Wojcik Conference Center. Over 200 individuals participated in the event, including many from other community colleges. Harper continues to enjoy the reputation of being a leader in assessment.
- The annual Strategic Planning Retreat was held on April 11. Over 80 faculty and staff participated in the retreat. Dr. Joanne Bashford from Florida, one of Harper's Achieving the Dream coaches also attended and offered key insights into our progress and offered advice on areas of focus for the next strategic plan. The group also reviewed highlights from the Environmental Scan and how these data and findings can inform our future strategic plan.
- In collaboration with NIU, the Research Department has finalized an updated Environmental Scan. Highlights from the report will be presented at the April Board meeting.
 - The *Student Success Report* updated and released.

Workforce and Strategic Alliances

- The Cook County Motorcycle Safety Training Program has been launched by Harper's Continuing Education (CE) area. After Harper was awarded the contract for this program, quick action was needed to develop systems to enroll students into the program and hire administrative personnel and faculty to teach courses. This was a collaborative effort between CE, Human Resources, and Information Technology.
- Harper offered the first Comfort Dog training class with great success. Students completed on online component and then worked with the dogs during a "lab" experience at Harper's Northeast Center.
- The Job Placement Resource Center is developing a badging system for students who are "job ready." These badges affirm that the students have completed resume review and interviewing preparation courses.
- The Fast Track office has developed an Associates of Arts track that will target "young adult" students. The program provides a pathway for students to earn a transfer degree in about two years—while attending classes part-time. The program will be launched in fall 2014.

Communications and Legislative Relations

- Six members of Harper's Student Senate, including Student Trustee Scott Lietzow, traveled to the State Capitol in Springfield on April 2 for Student Advocacy sponsored by Illinois Community College Board Student Advisory Committee (ICCB SAC.) Students met with State Representatives Fred Crespo, Tom Morrison, David Harris and Michelle Mussman and State Senators Dan Kotowski and Matt Murphy. The students talked with lawmakers about reserving a portion for MAP funds for community college students. Unlike university students, who generally enroll in the fall, community college students enroll year-round and MAP funds are usually exhausted before the spring semester.



Members of Harper's Student Senate with State Senator Matt Murphy

- Maria Coons, Phil Burdick and Trustee Bill Kelley were in Washington D.C. last month updating lawmakers on Harper programs and seeking possible federal support for new initiatives. Bill, Phil and Maria met with U.S. Representative Tammy Duckworth. Phil and Bill met with Higher education staff members from the offices of U.S. Senators Mark Kirk and Richard Durbin and U.S. Representatives Brad Schneider and Peter Roskam. Maria stepped in for Dr. Ender and met with Ajita Talwalker Menon, Senior Policy Advisor for Higher Education, White House Domestic Policy Council; J.J. Raynor, AMP 2.0 Policy Advisor, National Economic Council; and Mark Mitsui, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Community Colleges Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education.



Bill Kelley, Phil Burdick and Maria Coons with U.S. Representative Tammy Duckworth in Washington D.C.

- State Lawmakers have begun working on the FY 2015 budget. In his budget address, Governor Quinn has proposed making the temporary state income tax increase permanent. The additional two percentage point increase (from 3% to 5%) is set to expire at the end of the year. If the increase is allowed to expire, the Governor says he will be forced to make deep budget cuts including a 12% reduction in funding for higher education.
- Harper stories in the media included extensive coverage of Rita and John Canning's \$1 million gift to the Women's Program:
 - A story in *Crain's Chicago Business* by reporter Shia Kapos
 - A feature story in the *Daily Herald*
 - A *Daily Herald* editorial in its weekly Soapbox column
 - A feature story in the *Barrington Courier-Review* and the *Buffalo Grove Countryside*.
- Other news stories include:
 - A *Daily Herald* article about the speech and debate team's first-place finish in the Community College division of the Phi Kappa Delta national tournament in Indianapolis.
 - *Daily Herald* feature story by reporter Eileen Daday on longtime art professor John Knudsen, who passed away March 13.
 - A *Daily Herald* article – along with a great photo – on the front page of its Neighbor section highlighting the InZone summer camp.
 - A *Daily Herald* article about an organic gardening class being offered for adults, children and people with disabilities through a partnership between Harper and the Little City Foundation.

We were disappointed to learn that Dr. Tom Leonard had announced he is leaving the District 220 superintendent's position to take a similar position in Austin, Texas. Tom will be missed for his huge commitment to our partnership, his genuine commitment to students and his quick wit. He has been a good friend and counselor to me. Join me in thanking Tom for his leadership and service.

You may or may not know that annually I visit with each of the varsity sport teams that compete on behalf of the College. Earlier in March, I met with our baseball team. This is a group of 28 men, half of which come from our district sender high schools. Many of these young men participated in the alumni baseball game last fall. This is an annual tradition where alumni play against our current team. I participated with a pre-game talk and threw out the first ball. While speaking to the group, I mentioned to the current baseball team that they were in the "best time of their lives" and reminded them that what they were experiencing was not "life." Many knowing nods came from the alumni. At my team meeting last month, I asked the young men who were with me that day if anything I had said came to mind. One hand quickly rose up, and the young man responded, "I do sir," and he repeated my admonition. Then he added, "I'll never forget it the rest of my life. It shall always remind me to enjoy today and know that 'real' life is much harder, with responsibility, joy, and grief." Moments like that remind me that we never know what "sticks" so embrace every moment with students as an opportunity to shape a future. I am a lucky guy to be able to do so!

Finally, Cathy and I wish all of you a wonderful Easter weekend and Passover holiday. We are traveling to Virginia to visit family and friends and will return Thursday, April 24. Enjoy the spring weather!

Ken